Scottish Council Elections 5 May 2022

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In May this year, there will be elections in all 32 of Scotland's local authorities, to decide who runs our councils for the next 5 years.

Councils have responsibility for, amongst other things: road maintenance for non-trunk roads; schools; parking; planning; licensing; refuse collection; care of the elderly; parks, leisure centres, and swimming pools; libraries; environmental health. They also collect non-domestic rates and the council tax. They set the rate for the latter, though it only makes up about 18% of their income.

Therefore, the average voter is probably more directly affected by council decisions than by those of any other tier of government. So it is a shame that turn-out for council elections tends to be the lowest. At the last elections in 2017, turn-out in East Ayrshire was 44%.

Council elections use the Single Transferable Vote electoral system. Unlike other elections in Scotland, voters may vote for multiple candidates, on a single ballot paper. This leads to a lot of confusion and misunderstanding, and some very dodgy advice (usually unintentionally so).

We hope that the guide below will make things clearer.

All council wards in Scotland are multi-member. East Ayrshire has 9 wards, returning a total of 32 councillors. If you live in Kilmarnock North, Kilmarnock South, Irvine Valley or Doon Valley, you will have 3 councillors in your ward. If you live anywhere else in East Ayrshire, you will have 4.

Your ballot paper (whether you vote in person at a polling station, or by post) will list all the candidates in alphabetical order of surname, with party affiliation if applicable. There may well be some independent candidates. You will be asked to put these candidates in order of preference.

xyz party	5
Betty BETA independent	3
Danny DELTA ab party	1
Tom THETA def party	4
Ursula UPSILON independent	2

You MUST

mark the box next to the candidate's name with a *number* – 1 for your first preference, 2 for your second preference, and so on.

You MUST NOT

mark the box with a cross or any other mark – only numbers are valid.

You CAN, but don't have to

rank all the candidates. This is where most of the confusion comes in.

It is **not** true that you can only vote for one candidate from a particular party; you are electing *individuals* who may or may not represent a party

It is **not** true that your lower preferences affect your higher preferences.

It is **not** true that ranking candidates from more than one party "splits the vote".

Why it makes sense to "vote till ye boak"

of the remaining seats.

If you only vote for your party's candidates, you are deciding not to express an opinion about who gets the other seats. That may be what you want to do, and that's fine. You don't have to carry on ranking the candidates if you'd rather not.

But if you do mind who gets those seats, you can have an influence *without undermining your favoured party's chances at all*. So you can rank all the candidates, or stop when you reach one you just can't bring yourself to assign a preference to (ie, they make you boak).

How this works [simplified to avert boredom]

When the votes are counted, candidates with enough votes to satisfy the calculated quota are elected, and nothing can un-elect them. During the process, candidates without enough support may be eliminated – nothing can reverse that, either.

Your vote is *transferable* – it stays with your first preference until that person is either elected (yay!) or eliminated (boo!). Then it *transfers* to your second preference, until *that* candidate is elected or eliminated. And so on, until all the seats are filled, or you've stopped ranking candidates, whichever happens sooner.

Your lower preferences won't even be looked at till the fate of your higher ranked candidates has been determined, so they can't damage those candidates' chances.

Not splitting the vote

Voting for more candidates doesn't "split the vote", either. Your preferences are considered *in turn*; your vote isn't distributed between the candidates you rank and your higher preferences are not diluted by your lower ones.

So if you want the maximum possible pro-independence representation on East Ayrshire Council…

It makes sense to rank *all* candidates from pro-indy parties, and to express a preference between the other candidates if you wish.

About Us

Yes East Ayrshire was formed in 2012 ahead of the Referendum for Scottish Independence in 2014 by a handful of dedicated activists who firmly believed in Scotland's ability to govern itself, with all powers held at our Scottish Parliament in Holyrood.

The team grew and grew and a few months before 18th September 2014, the day of the referendum, had became one of the largest Yes teams in the country, featuring regularly on newsreels and with people from all walks of life dedicating thousands of hours, wearing out shoes, literally street and door campaigning for Scotland!

The result was of course disappointing, with 52.42% voting to remain in the uk, although over the course of the campaign support in East Ayrshire rose from around 24% in the polls to 47.22% on the day. We are here to build on that huge result. With the expectation that a new campaign will be announced in the next few months, and the level of support from 2014 as our starting point, it's a short climb, all hands on deck, for us to be Yes, East Ayrshire!

In December 2017, we moved our campaign space in Kilmarnock – to 31c Titchfield Street, on the site of what was previously the SNP Shop, a few doors down from our MP Alan Brown's Constituency Office. The shop has hosted many very popular events, been used to promote national and local Scottish Independence events, to sell Independence-related merchandise and is entirely funded by supporters and members and staffed by volunteers who are on hand from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Friday (at present) to assist with any questions voters might have about what our future Independent Scotland will be able to achieve, and the progress we can expect, once we have gained back all our powers and hold on to all our taxes currently sent to Westminster, to spend in Scotland – like pretty much every other country in the world!

We're keen to have new volunteers in the shop, for people to bring their ideas on how best we can send our message out to the people of East Ayrshire from Waterside to Lugar, from Cumnock to Stewarton, Kilmarnock and Dalmellington and beyond! For more information – message our FB, Instagram or Twitter @YesEastAyrshire pages or email us: yeseastayrshire@gmail.com. We have a membership fee of £20 per household, £12 per waged person, £6 per unwaged – members get first chance to book seats at our events as well as a discount on our merchandise.

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YES EAST AYRSHIRE

Make your Yes Vote Count on May 6

This year's Holyrood election is both unusual and crucial – unusual because of the pandemic, crucial because of the behaviour of the Westminster government. YEA is explicitly non-party-political, so we will not be endorsing particular Read more…

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